



PROGRESSIVE NEWS UPDATE – March 27th

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Quote of the Day

"I would strongly recommend that you continue to recognize that global warming is a real and serious issue."

EPA Administrator Christie Whitman in a memo to President Bush, days before the Administration announced it would not be regulating carbon dioxide emissions

SUMMARIES

1. EPA CHIEF LOBBIED ON WARMING BEFORE BUSH'S EMISSIONS SWITCH (news)

"A week before President Bush broke his campaign pledge to reduce carbon dioxide emissions, Environmental Protection Agency chief Christine Todd Whitman warned him that he must demonstrate his commitment to cutting greenhouse gases or risk undermining the United States' standing among allies around the world. In a March 6 memo to Bush after she met with European environmental ministers in Italy, Whitman told the president that global warming was an important "credibility issue" for the United States, and that "we need to appear engaged . . . and build some bona fides first." "I would strongly recommend that you continue to recognize that global warming is a real and serious issue," Whitman said in the memo. One week later, however, Bush announced that he would not seek a reduction in the carbon dioxide emissions from the nation's power plants."

Washington Post, Pianin, 3/27

<http://washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A62038-2001Mar26.html>

2. ADMINISTRATION RESCINDS ORDER FORCING CHEMICAL COMPANIES TO DISCLOSE HAZARDS (news)

"The Environmental Protection Agency rescinded a Clinton administration proposal to increase public access to information about the potential consequences of chemical plant accidents. Advocates of disseminating the so-called worst-case scenarios submitted by chemical plant operators say the data could help communities prepare for disasters like industrial explosions."

New York Times, Hulse, 3/27

<http://www.nytimes.com/2001/03/27/politics/27ACCI.html>

3. NEW REPORT: CHEMICAL COMPANIES HIDING POISON REVELATIONS (editorial)

"Last night, Americans learned they are being poisoned. And they learned that the perpetrators have known about the poisonings for 50 years and have spent millions of dollars to keep us from finding out. "It was a story we never were supposed to know," Bill Moyers says in his PBS special, "Trade Secrets," which premiered last night. Moyers brings to light thousands of memos and scientific reports that show a vast coverup within America's chemical companies. Industry executives had research showing evidence that chemicals like vinyl chloride caused cancer and other health problems. But, time after time, the companies agreed to keep the findings from the public and their own workers."

San Francisco Chronicle, Ryan, 3/27

<http://www.commondreams.org/views01/0327-06.htm>

<http://www.pbs.org/tradesecrets/>

4. GOP EMBARKING ON 'BLITZKREIG' OF ENVIRONMENT (editorial)

"'Brazen thuggery' pretty well describes the Bush administration's mandate-empty blitzkrieg on environmental regulation. Do not be lulled by the folksy image President Bush likes to exude; his administration is serious about forcing a radical realignment of the U.S. economy. Health, environmental safety, protection of natural resources and international environmental cooperation are being summarily jettisoned."

Minneapolis Star Tribune, Editorial Board, 3/27

http://www.startribune.com/viewers/qview/cgi/qview.cgi?template=opinion_a&slug=ED27

5. ON THE ENVIRONMENT, BUSH THE UNITER BECOMES BUSH THE DIVIDER (editorial)

"The Bush administration is wasting no time in confirming the fears of those who believe George W. Bush is anti-environment. Bush the uniter has become Bush the divider. He's engaged in a divisive, rapid-fire rollback of protections for drinking water, air and forests as well as for the national monuments and refuges where commercial resource extraction is understood to be off-limits by everyone except, it seems, those who profit from such activity."

Seattle Post Intelligencer, Editorial Board, 3/27

<http://seattlepi.nwsource.com/opinion/ambushed.shtml>

6. GREED – NOT SUPPLY PROBLEMS – FUELING THE ENERGY CRISIS (editorial)

"Deregulation of the energy industry was supposed to bring lower prices through the invisible hand of the free market. It didn't. Ask any electricity consumer in California, natural gas consumer in the Midwest or home heating oil consumer in the Northeast. Energy prices have accelerated, energy company profits have skyrocketed and consumers are at the mercy of corporations. Why? Deregulation freed energy companies to manipulate energy supplies in order to raise the price."

In These Times, Rep. Dennis Kucinich, 3/25

<http://www.inthesetimes.com/web2510/kucinich2510.html>

7. SLOWING ECONOMY WILL MEAN HIGHER NUMBER OF UNINSURED (news)

"A slowing economy and renewed double-digit inflation in health insurance costs are all but certain to cause an increase in the uninsured later this year and next, in the view of experts from foundations, business and consumer groups and the insurance industry. And while the issue is not now a major priority for the Bush administration or either party on Capitol Hill, Congress is beginning to consider tentative steps toward expanding coverage."

Republicans and a few Democrats are proposing tax credits to help people buy insurance, and Democrats and a few Republicans are seeking to expand participation in existing federally aided programs. Still, Congressional action seems less certain than an increase in the number of uninsured, who totaled 42.5 million, or 14.2 percent of the population, in 1999, the last year for which statistics are available.” New York Times, Pear, 3/27

<http://www.nytimes.com/2001/03/27/politics/27HEAL.html>

8. STATES SEEKING INNOVATIVE WAYS OF CUTTING DRUG COSTS (news)

“States seeking to curb escalating prescription-drug costs have hatched another possible strategy: letters and ads urging doctors to prescribe cheaper generic drugs. Officials from six states, meeting last Friday in Atlanta, also laid the groundwork for their previously reported effort to create a multistate drug-purchasing pool for more than a million state employees, retirees and their families as leverage to demand steep rebates from drug companies. One of the first steps: a survey of states' existing discounts, contracts with pharmaceutical-benefits managers and other information.”

Wall Street Journal, Gold, 3/27

<http://interactive.wsj.com/articles/SB98564560839715999.htm>

9. LIEBERMAN KEEPS UP DRUM BEAT ON PROGRESSIVE CAUCUS TAX PLAN (news)

Former Democratic vice presidential candidate Joseph Lieberman, D-Connecticut, wants to stimulate the economy with a tax plan that would immediately give each taxpayer a \$300 check.

CNN, Bash, 3/26

<http://www.cnn.com/2001/ALLPOLITICS/03/26/lieberman.taxcut.02/index.html>

10. REPORT: REPEAL OF ESTATE TAX WOULD COST MORE THAN ORIGINALLY THOUGHT (news)

“Repealing the estate tax would cost hundreds of billions of dollars more than any previous estimate, according to a study by Congress's bipartisan Joint Committee on Taxation, raising further uncertainty over already-embattled efforts to ease the tax. The committee's report found that current proposals to repeal the estate and gift tax would open new loopholes for well-to-do people to avoid taxes that would help the estimated costs more than double, to as much as \$662.2 billion over 10 years if repealed immediately. Opening such loopholes alone would cost \$252 billion that hadn't been anticipated over that time, the study said.”

Wall Street Journal, McKinnon, 3/27

<http://interactive.wsj.com/articles/SB985645170948080920.htm>

11. THE CREDIT CARD CONGRESS (news)

Congress recently gave a bipartisan nod to a bill that would dramatically overhaul the current bankruptcy code, giving banks and credit card companies even greater power over debt-burdened Americans.

In These Times, Nelson, 3/25

<http://www.inthesetimes.com/web2510/nelson2510.html>

12. CEOs GROSS OVERCOMPENSATION SHOULD BE TIED TO PERFORMANCE (news)

“Union representatives yesterday called on several big corporations to link executives' pay to their performance, saying that some chief executives have been grossly overcompensated. “I can't think of any other job that pays so well for failure,” said Richard L. Trumka, secretary-treasurer of the AFL-CIO. “This is a system out of control.” The challenge heralded a battle of ballots this proxy season as activist institutional investors ask shareholders to approve resolutions restricting the way corporations pay top executives.”

Washington Post, Hilzenrath, 3/27

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A62358-2001Mar26.html>

13. A BIGGER, BADDER TRADE DEAL (news)

“During his first months in the White House, George W. Bush has already tilted politics against worker safety and for tax giveaways to the rich, but on one front--trade and global economic agreements--there has been remarkable continuity from the Clinton era, just as Clinton extended the agenda of the first Bush regime. However, the younger Bush inherits a public skepticism about corporate globalization that has deepened since his father was in office. In broad terms, the battles in the near term will follow the same lines as over the past decade. Fast track--repackaged as “presidential trade promotion authority”-- will again be the major fight in Congress this year, but the biggest street fight--in Quebec City and dozens of U.S. cities in late April-- will be over the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), a proposed extension of an even more pro-corporate NAFTA to the Western Hemisphere.”

In These Times, Moberg, 3/25

<http://www.inthesetimes.com/web2510/moberg2510.html>

14. BUSH SEEMING TO DO ‘AS MUCH DAMAGE AS POSSIBLE’ IN HIS FIRST 100 DAYS (editorial)

“Let's see which Bush softball we can hit out of the park this week. Should it be tolerating arsenic in the water supply, cutting funds for abused children or eliminating the historic and nonpartisan evaluation of judicial candidates by the American Bar Assn.? With the Senate hanging on one vote, this administration acts as if it has only limited time to do as much damage as possible to the environment, consumers, the non-rich and common sense. One day, President Bush appoints as the government's head regulator a professor who's made a career of milking corporate funding while opposing environmental regulation. The next day, we learn that our new U.N. ambassador-in-waiting aided Central American death squads. Not to mention earlier Bush administration appointments, such as turning over the Justice Department to John Ashcroft and other right-wing zealots.”

LA Times, Scheer, 3/27

<http://www.latimes.com/news/comment/20010327/t000026255.html>